

Submission Form

At its 35th session (UNESCO Paris, 2011), the World Heritage Committee (Decision 35COM12D.7) “requested the World Heritage Centre, with the support of the Advisory Bodies, **to develop, for further consideration the proposal** contained in Document WHC-11/35.COM/12D [...] and to further **explore ways of recognising and rewarding best practice through a one-off initiative** at the closing event of the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention (November 2012, Japan)...”.

States Parties to the World Heritage Convention are invited to participate in this initiative by proposing World Heritage properties in their country that they regard as an example of successful management and sustainable development.

In order to be eligible the site has to apply with the following criteria:

- The suggested site must be a property inscribed on the World Heritage List;
- Successful management and sustainable development has to be clearly demonstrated;
- Best practices are considered those that are tried, tested and applied in different situations and in a wider context;
- An overall good performance on all headings mentioned in the submission form, with an exemplary performance in at least one of the areas;
- An outstanding example of innovative management in dealing with one or more management challenges / issues that could offer lessons to other sites.

Each State Party may propose a maximum of two properties, preferably relating to one cultural and one natural site.

This form contains 9 topics for demonstrating best management practice – it is not necessary to comply with all of them but it would be appreciated if you could provide a comprehensive response to as many topics as possible. In your responses to the question, please provide all facts and figures to substantiate the answers, and describe the before and after situation of implementing the best practice intervention. The objective is to illustrate clearly why the example can qualify as a best practice and can be used as a source of inspiration for other World Heritage properties.

The topics are based on questions dealt with in the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

Recognizing and rewarding best practice in management of World Heritage properties

State/ Party: Canada/Parks Canada

Title proposed World Heritage property: SGang Gwaay

Brief description of the property:

SGang Gwaay Llnagaay (Village of SGang Gwaay)* is located on a small island at the southernmost tip of the remote archipelago of Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands) off the west coast of British Columbia, Canada. The island is called SGang Gwaay and is located within the boundaries of the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve, and Haida Heritage Site.

At SGang Gwaay Llnagaay the remains of large cedar long houses, together with a number of carved mortuary and memorial poles, illustrate the art and way of life of the Haida. The site commemorates the living culture of the Haida, based on fishing and hunting, their relationship with the land and sea, and offers a visual key to their oral traditions. The village was occupied until shortly after 1880. What survives is unique in the world, a 19th century Haida village where the ruins of houses and memorial or mortuary poles illustrate the power and artistry of Haida society. While each year these ruins retreat further back to the earth it is the living Haida culture that continues to grow and thrive on Haida Gwaii and beyond.

The Haida are an Aboriginal people whose traditional territory includes the area around Haida Gwaii in Canada as well as parts of south eastern Alaska, specifically the Alexander Archipelago. These people speak the Haida language and have a strong connection with the marine environment. It is from this environment that they obtain sustenance for both physical and spiritual well-being. Remains of houses, together with carved mortuary and memorial poles, illustrate the Haida people's art and way of life. The site commemorates the living culture of the Haida people and their relationship to the land and sea, and offers a visual key to their oral traditions. Even in its remote location almost 2,000 visitors make their way to the site each year to experience this connection between the land, sea and people.

***Note:** SGang Gwaay Llnagaay is the current Haida spelling for the village site but the site has been previously identified as Ninstints (by UNESCO) and as Nan Sdins (by Canadian Historic Sites and Monuments Board).

Please answer the questions below demonstrating the successful management and sustainable development of the World Heritage property and why it is an example of a best practice.

Topics for demonstrating best management practice:	Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practice in relation to the topic:
<p>1. Conservation:</p> <p><i>What innovative management practices or strategies are being applied in order to ensure the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property (e.g. better resource management, restoration and rehabilitation, addressing various man-made or natural threats and challenges, etc.)?</i></p>	<p>The <u>S</u>Gang Gwaay World Heritage Site is integral to and nested within Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve, and Haida Heritage Site. As such, it benefits from the added protection and conservation efforts afforded it through Canada's National Parks Act and National Marine Conservation Areas Act, as well as the Gwaii Haanas Agreement and the Gwaii Haanas Marine Agreement, which outlines how Gwaii Haanas will be managed cooperatively by the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada. Gwaii Haanas, including <u>S</u>Gang Gwaay, has been cooperatively managed by Canada and the Haida Nation through the Archipelago Management Board (AMB), for almost 20 years. The AMB is comprised of equal membership from the Haida Nation and from the Government of Canada.</p> <p>Together the AMB oversees the management of the area and the participation of the Haida representatives ensures that cultural concerns for <u>S</u>Gang Gwaay are addressed.</p> <p>There are a number of innovative management practises in place to ensure the conservation of the outstanding universal value (OUV) at <u>S</u>Gang Gwaay.</p> <p>1. The Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program, funded by Parks Canada, contributes to the protection of the site and improves resource management. The Watchmen are Haida people who live and work on site at <u>S</u>Gang Gwaay during the summer months. Through their efforts, the number of visitors to the site is managed so that there is minimal impact to the cultural resources. As well, they fulfil an important educational function by providing historical and cultural information to the visitors. Watchmen living and working in this remote setting connect with their past and continue to practice the same traditional activities that their ancestors would have engaged in for many generations.</p>

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	<p>2. Management plans have been approved for both the marine and terrestrial components of Gwaii Haanas. Both the Gwaii Haanas Terrestrial Management plan and the Interim Marine Management Plan consider the protection and conservation needs of SGang Gwaay. The terrestrial plan specifically states that SGang Gwaay will be given special management in acknowledgement of its World Heritage status.</p> <p>3. The Backcountry Management Plan is a document that provides direction on items effecting visitor experience such as permissible visitor traffic at the site and trail development. The end result is that visitation is managed to ensure there is minimal impact to the OUV and cultural resources. At the same time, the visitors are offered an outstanding “uncrowded” experience.</p> <p>4. Practical Management Activities including monitoring and conservation work take place regularly.</p> <p>Monitoring the site on a regular basis creates a greater understanding of the natural dynamics at play at SGang Gwaay and this knowledge contributes to effective management. For example, Gwaii Haanas has facilitated an x-ray technology project that helped determine the health of the poles and routinely photographs the poles as a visual record of their condition.</p> <p>Conservation work has included both regular maintenance and extensive pole straightening projects that have resulted in extending the life of 5 poles that were in danger of falling. Regular maintenance activities include trimming saplings and moss from on the poles and house remains, and clipping grass around the poles.</p> <p>All of the above management practices, plans and activities work individually and collectively towards conservation of the OUV at SGang Gwaay.</p>

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2.	<p>Local People:</p> <p><i>What exemplary practices are you using in order to effectively address the needs of local stakeholders within the management system for the property, and enable their full and active participation?</i></p>	<p>Gwaii Haanas has used a variety of mechanisms to engage local people (in particular the Haida) and address their needs.</p> <p>For instance, both the AMB as well as the Watchmen Program provide a forum for active Haida participation in management and/or protection activities.</p> <p>Elected Haida representatives to the AMB work with federal government counterparts in reaching management decisions and in setting the direction for activities at SGang Gwaay, and more broadly for Gwaii Haanas as a protected area.</p> <p>The Watchmen are “guardians” of the site. They take their name and role from the guardians who sit atop the poles; these guardians watched over the villages in times past and can still be seen on poles today. (See Point 1 for additional information on the AMB and Watchmen Program.)</p> <p>In addition, the AMB worked directly with contemporary Haida hereditary leaders through meetings and visits to SGang Gwaay in determining the future management of the site. These recommendations are recorded in the draft National Historic Site Commemorative Integrity Statement (CIS).</p> <p>Gwaii Haanas staff work in partnership with the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program (S.H.I.P.) to ensure that the Haida language, particularly place names, are properly used and spelled at sites including SGang Gwaay. In 2007 Gwaii Haanas staff travelled with and supported a group of S.H.I.P. elders on a boat trip to Gwaii Haanas and SGang Gwaay to continue their work on documenting place names.</p> <p>Gwaii Haanas’ staffing policy offers full and active participation for Haida. The staffing policy calls for a minimum of 50% representation of Haida in Gwaii Haanas staff. Whether in</p>

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		<p>communications or conservation type positions, Gwaii Haanas staff take the protection of the OUV and cultural resources at SGang Gwaay into consideration as part of their day to day work related to the site.</p> <p>Lastly, as stated above, management plans have been developed for both the terrestrial and marine components of Gwaii Haanas and these plans include the management of SGang Gwaay. Stakeholders (Haida and non-Haida) had and continue to have the opportunity to provide their input into the plans.</p> <p>Through the many opportunities noted above, local people have fulfilled a leadership role in all aspects of planning, management, and operating SGang Gwaay.</p>
3.	<p>Legal framework:</p> <p><i>What special measures have you taken to ensure that the legal framework for the World Heritage site is effective in maintaining the OUV of the property?</i></p>	<p>The OUV of SGang Gwaay is effectively maintained through a number of legal frameworks including:</p> <p>The Council of the Haida Nation has designated a Haida Heritage Site which encompassed all land and sea in the southern two thirds of Haida Gwaii, including all of Gwaii Haanas (and SGang Gwaay).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A National Historic Site designation by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC). The Historic Sites and Monuments Act provides the legislation to protect these sites. - SGang Gwaay is situated within Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site and, as such, regulations under the Canada National Parks Act provide protection for historical and archaeological resources, and provide the ability to Parks Canada to manage and control use and access to the site. - Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site's

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		<p>interim management plan and zoning plan identifies the waters immediately surrounding SGang Gwaay as an area of full protection; which means no resource extraction can be undertaken within the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Canada's <i>Fisheries Act</i> allows for sustainable resource harvesting in the waters beyond the SGang Gwaay zone of full protection, which helps to ensure a healthy ecosystem. The health of the ocean contributes to the health of the Haida – a living culture dependent on the ocean for sustenance from both a material and spiritual perspective. This living culture is represented by the SGang Gwaay site.
4.	<p>Boundaries:</p> <p><i>What innovative ways of dealing with the boundaries of the property, including for management of the buffer zone do you have in place, to effectively to manage the site and protect its OUV?</i></p>	<p>As mentioned above, the SGang Gwaay World Heritage site is nested within Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve, and Haida Heritage Site. As it is a World Heritage site inscribed in the earlier years of the Convention, it will benefit from the upcoming Retrospective Inventory project in terms of boundary and buffer zone definition. Additional layers of protection are provided through the <u>Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site Management Plan for the Terrestrial Area</u> and the <u>Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site Interim Management Plan and Zoning Plan</u>.</p> <p>Through these wider boundaries and the accompanying management plans, the site of SGang Gwaay and its OUV are legally protected.</p>
5.	<p>Sustainable finance:</p> <p><i>What effective strategies have you developed and implemented to assure adequate and sustainable financial</i></p>	<p>The planning, management and operations of Gwaii Haanas (including SGang Gwaay), are funded annually through the Parks Canada Agency. Gwaii Haanas receives funding for both the National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site and the National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site. Within these budgets there is ongoing funding</p>

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	<i>resources for implementing the management measures required to maintain the site's OUV?</i>	earmarked for the site of SGang Gwaay.
6.	<p>Staffing training and development:</p> <p><i>What approaches and strategies have you developed and implemented to assure that the human resources are adequate to manage the World Heritage property?</i></p>	<p>Managing the World Heritage Site property of SGang Gwaay in its remote location requires dedication, commitment as well as formal training. Watchmen receive training from Gwaii Haanas cultural resource management staff on how to do conservation work on the poles and house remains. As well, Parks Canada is a significant contributor to a series of cultural resource management courses offered by the local community college. Through these courses, which are mandatory for someone wishing to be a Watchman, the participants learn the historical and cultural significance of SGang Gwaay. This information is then passed on to the visitor which increases visitor understanding of the site and its values.</p> <p>As well, Parks Canada staff at Gwaii Haanas receive training so that they can participate in the conservation work on the poles and house beams. A Cultural Resources Management (CRM) position is in place and this person has responsibilities specific to SGang Gwaay. The CRM advisor can draw on a number of documents and policies when undertaking these responsibilities including, among others, the Parks Canada <u>Cultural Resource Management Policy</u> as well as the <u>Standard and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada</u>.</p> <p>As such, the combination of training for the Watchmen as well as the Gwaii Haanas staff, assures appropriate knowledge is provided to those entrusted with the care and protection of the cultural resources and the OUV at SGang Gwaay.</p>
7.	<p>Sustainable development:</p> <p><i>What are the effective mechanisms in place to ensure that resource use permitted in and around the World</i></p>	<p>There are a number of effective mechanisms in place to ensure that resource use, in and around the site of SGang Gwaay, does not have an impact on the OUV. SGang Gwaay is situated within the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site. Legislation, such as the Canada <i>National Parks</i></p>

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<p><i>Heritage site is sustainable and does not impact negatively on OUV?</i></p>	<p>Act, National Marine Conservation Areas Act and agreements, such as the Gwaii Haanas Agreement and Gwaii Haanas Marine Agreement, stipulate who may access and use the resources.</p> <p>In and around SGang Gwaay, only the Haida are able to extract resources from the land and/or sea when undertaking cultural activities. These activities have no impact on the cultural resources or the OUV at SGang Gwaay as the Haida are committed to the protection of this site. Aside from this, there are no other terrestrial extractive uses permitted.</p> <p>Resource use by visitors is addressed in Point # 9.</p>
<p>8. Education and interpretation programmes:</p> <p><i>How do the education, interpretation and awareness programmes you have developed and implemented significantly enhance the understanding of OUV of the site among stakeholders?</i></p>	<p>Awareness and understanding of SGang Gwaay, the UNESCO World Heritage site within Gwaii Haanas is an integral part of the Visitor Experience and External Relations strategies for this Parks Canada Field Unit. Haida members of the AMB provide input, guidance and direction with respect to the historical and living Haida culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visitors planning a trip to Gwaii Haanas have several opportunities to learn about SGang Gwaay. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First, through their trip planning efforts whether in direct interaction with Gwaii Haanas staff and/or visiting the Gwaii Haanas web site. ○ Once a trip is scheduled and prior to departure, visitors attend a mandatory orientation session which highlights the World Heritage Site and provides guidance and direction about how to best experience the site. Visitors depart this session with a custom designed visitor guide to take on their trip – including SGang Gwaay content. ○ On site, the Watchmen share their stories, experiences and knowledge with the visitors – consistently rated by visitors as one of the top experiences they have in Gwaii Haanas. ○ When visitors connect with Gwaii Haanas staff working on site or in the field, this

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	<p>provides another opportunity for sharing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visiting the Haida Heritage Centre in Skidegate, BC offers visitors an opportunity to interact with roving Gwaii Haanas interpretation staff and learn about SGang Gwaay at the Haida Gwaay Museum ○ Whether or not a person has the opportunity to visit Haida Gwaii, Gwaii Haanas or SGang Gwaay, other opportunities to learn about SGang Gwaay exist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Film crews from around the world frequent the site and include this footage as components of their programs Gwaii Haanas staff travel nationally and internationally to give presentations on SGang Gwaay as well as its unique management team -- the AMB. ○ Print media (magazines, newspapers etc.) ○ Parks_Canada Agency website and publications <p>All of these media have contributed to making the public more aware of SGang Gwaay - its history, its cultural connection to the Haida people as well as its value from a national and international perspective.</p>
<p>9. Tourism and interpretation:</p> <p><i>What innovative plans have you designed and successfully implemented to ensure that visitor management does not negatively impact on the maintenance of the property's OUV?</i></p>	<p>Ensuring the OUV of SGang Gwaay is not negatively impacted by visitation is well aligned with the AMB's management direction which seeks to provide visitors with opportunities for an uncrowded, wilderness experience.</p> <p>Watchmen, who are on site during the visitor season, ensure the number of people on site at one time meet the direction set out in the <u>Backcountry Management Plan</u>. As well, when the Watchmen accompany the visitor to the site they provide cultural and historical interpretation – which increases understanding of the site and its values, thereby reducing the potential for the visitor to have a negative impact on the site.</p> <p>In addition, the <u>Skung Gwaii Site Plan*</u> plays a part in reducing negative impacts. The plan limits and directs on-site development thereby minimizing negative impacts to the cultural</p>

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	<p>resources. For instance, trails and boardwalk are established around the site so as to be sensitive to the cultural resources.</p> <p><i>*"Skung Gwaii" is an earlier spelling, now corrected to S<u>G</u>ang Gwaay.</i></p>
<p>Brief description/ summary of the best practice, including a statement on how it can be useful for other sites (max.600 words)</p>	
<p>Cooperative management is theoretically an ideal way to meet the differing needs of multiple parties with a common goal. In Gwaii Haanas and at S<u>G</u>ang Gwaay it is the reality. In 1993, Canada and the Haida signed the <i>Gwaii Haanas Agreement</i> and for almost 20 years the Government of Canada via the Parks Canada Agency and the Haida Nation have worked together to protect the lands and waters of this natural and cultural treasure. The opening paragraphs of the Agreement state that the parties agree to disagree on who owns the lands and waters and that regardless, the lands and waters, they agree to work together to protect them. A feature of the <i>Agreements</i> is a mechanism for dealing with issues that cannot be resolved cooperatively at the management table. A testament to the success of the Archipelago Management Board,(AMB) is that this feature has never had to be implemented. Over the years numerous organizations, governments, and first nations have visited Gwaii Haanas and the AMB to learn from their experience. This breadth of cooperative management experience is a best practice that the AMB can share with other sites that are experiencing challenges related to cooperative management of their site.</p> <p>Beyond the AMB and its successful model of cooperative management, S<u>G</u>ang Gwaay/Gwaii Haanas benefits from significant numbers of Haida people who dedicate their careers to protecting, presenting and managing S<u>G</u>ang Gwaay as Parks Canada staff. A minimum of 50% of the team at Gwaii Haanas are of Haida ancestry which is in keeping with both the <i>Gwaii Haanas Agreement</i> and <i>Gwaii Haanas Marine Agreement</i>. The Haida Gwaii Watchmen programme, funded by Parks Canada, provides an additional opportunity for those of Haida ancestry to get involved in the day to day caretaking of this treasured place. Through these opportunities, descendants of those that once inhabited the village are now protecting, educating and interpreting the history, culture and connection between the land, the sea and the Haida people. Ensuring the connection of people and place continues is a best practice that the AMB can share with other sites that are seeking to involve first nations and/or local people in the management of their site.</p>	

Finally, please provide us, if possible, with up to ten images of the concerned World Heritage property that can be used free of rights in UNESCO publications (commercial and/or non-commercial), and on the UNESCO website. Please provide the name of the photographer and the caption along with the images (he/she will be credited for any use of the images).